

Hawaii Marine

Lava Dogs return in time for the holidays



Lance Cpl. James A. Sauter | Hawaii Marine

Staff Sgt. Xavier Roman, career planner, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, kisses his wife during a homecoming ceremony at Hangar 105 on Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Nov. 19. The battalion returned after a seven-month deployment to Garmsir District, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. “It feels so great to be home,” said Capt. Robert Christian, scout sniper platoon commander, Headquarters and Service Company, 1/3.

Lance Cpl. James A. Sauter

Combat Correspondent

Last weekend was joyful for many families on and off Marine Corps Base Hawaii as they celebrated the return of two companies from 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, Saturday at Hangar 105 from their seven-month deployment in Garmsir District, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

“This was my second deployment and the communication was a whole lot better,” said the spouse of Capt. Robert Christian, scout sniper platoon commander, Headquarters and Service Company, 1/3. “When you get to talk with emails and video, it’s like he never left.”

While deployed to Garmsir District, 1/3 partnered with Afghan National Security Forces in conducting population-centric counterinsurgency operations to protect the local people, defeat insurgent forces and set conditions to transfer security back to the Afghan government.

“[The unit] helped set the conditions for the effective transition of security to the Afghan National Security Forces,” said Maj. John W. Black, executive officer, 1/3. “I’m very stoked for everyone who gets to come home, and I’m proud of them for the mission that they accomplished.”

Marines and sailors walked off the plane and onto a red carpet leading into the hangar where their cheering friends and families greeted them with hugs, kisses and a few tears.

“I was crying all day yesterday,” said 1/3 spouse Claudia Johnson. “I was speechless when he called me this morning and I told him that I had a surprise for him.”

Johnson was selected to be the first wife to kiss her husband as he came off the plane.

Christian’s wife and a friend stood together to

See LAVA DOGS, A-8

Guests dine, dance, learn new culture

Kristen Wong

Photojournalist

Guests celebrated National Native American Heritage Month with a luncheon program at Anderson Hall Dining Facility, Nov. 17.

The program, sponsored by 3rd Radio Battalion, featured guest speaker David “Windhorse” Long, with performances by David “Flying with Eagles and Running With the Wind” Bevett and Guywood “Song of Eagle” Dela Cruz.

“I want everybody to come out and learn about the different cultures we have,” said Gunnery Sgt. Carlos Barillas, the equal opportunity representative for 3rd Radio Battalion. “America is a melting pot full of many cultures and not everyone knows [enough] about them.”

Dela Cruz co-composed a song called “Medicine Eagle’s Journey,” and performed it at Anderson Hall with a traditional Native American flute.

“It’s an honor to always be here,” Dela Cruz said. “Everyone is captivated by the music. [The music is] soothing, calming. When you play [the music], it connects your mind, body and spirit.”

Each of the guests not only have Native

American ties, but military ties as well. Dela Cruz’s father and adopted mother are retired from the Army. Long served in the Navy and is a Vietnam veteran, while Bevett served more than 20 years in the Army and Navy, and has a son in the Marine Corps.

Long stressed that it is important for people to know about their heritage, because it keeps them grounded, and they can draw from their history to become stronger in life. Long said hopefully by attending the luncheon, guests will have a “deeper respect for our people.”

Bevett performed several traditional Native American dances, including a “crow hop” and a “sneak up.”

“I want people to know that we’re still thriving and are proud to fight for America,” Bevett said.

He also said dancing, for him, is a form of prayer.

“I pray for every warrior who has died in this world,” Bevett said. Before closing the program, Bevett invited the Marines, sailors and civilians to learn one traditional dance together. Several guests were also able to compliment the dance

See NATIVE AMERICAN, A-8



Kristen Wong | Hawaii Marine

Guest performer David Bevett leads guests in a traditional Native American dance at the National Native American Heritage Month luncheon, Nov. 17. National Native American Heritage Month is celebrated during the month of November. Aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, 3rd Radio Battalion hosted a luncheon at Anderson Hall Dining Facility, featuring performances by Bevett and Guywood Dela Cruz, as well as remarks by Bevett and David Windhorse Long.

HQBN food drive

Detroit native Gunnery Sgt. Raymond Evans, logistics chief for Headquarters Battalion, Marine Corps Base Hawaii and Miami native Lance Cpl. Eva M. Castillo, food service specialist for Headquarters Bn. collect goods after the Holiday Food Drive and Battalions Hike, Nov. 23. The purpose of the hike was not only to promote camaraderie, readiness and fitness, but to also collect nonperishable food items. The more than 2,800 pounds of food will be given to the local YMCA so food baskets can be put together for those in need during the holiday season.

Gunnery Sgt. Matthew O. Holly | Hawaii Marine



New aircraft scheduled to fly the skies around MCB Hawaii

Cpl. Vanessa American Horse

Combat Correspondent

Marine Corps Base Hawaii is expected to see several new aircraft in the airspace around base as part of the Corps’ plan to restructure and rebase its forces in the Pacific, according to a recent Marine Corps study.

The new types of aircraft will include P-8A Poseidon submarine-hunting jets, MV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor, AH-1 Zulu, Viper attack helicopters, and UH-1 Huey transport helicopters. With the arrival of the new aircraft, two squadrons of CH-53D Sea Stallion helicopters would be retired, as well as most of the Navy’s P-3C Orion sub hunters.

See NEW AIRCRAFT, A-8



We are the Champions
HQBN wins championship
See **B-3**



Makahiki
Military and community
celebrate Makahiki
See **C-3**

Saturday

High — 79
Low — 70

Sunday

High — 78
Low — 68

NEWS BRIEFS

Beach walkers beware: Don't touch monk seals!

Critically endangered monk seals are hauling out on our base's beaches with greater frequency than ever. It is a federal offense and a violation of Base regulations and the Endangered Species Act to approach, disturb, harass or harm these individuals in any way. If a monk seal is seen on or near a beach, do not approach it. Stay at least 100 feet away and call the Military Police Department at 257-2123.

For more information contact Diane Drigot, Environmental Department, diane.drigot@usmc.mil.

Pro Bowl tickets on sale at Information, Tickets and Tours

Pro Bowl 2012 is coming to Aloha Stadium Jan. 29, 2012. Marine Corps Community Services' Information, Tickets and Tours office at Mokapu Mall and Camp H.M. Smith has a selection of sideline and end zone seat tickets available. For more information, call ITT at 254-7563 (Kaneohe Bay) or 477-5143 (Camp Smith).

Hilltop Pool closure

The Hilltop Pool at The Officers' Club will continue to be closed through February 2012. Call 254-7655.

MCB Hawaii tree lighting ceremony

MCB Hawaii will host the 2011 tree lighting ceremony at 5 p.m., Dec. 4 at the Base Chapel.

The tree lighting ceremony will be open to all military and civilian personnel, their families and members of the local community.

2012 Tuition Assistance

Headquarters Marine Corps sent out a message stating the Marine Administrative Message explaining that tuition assistance has been cut by 75 percent was nullified. The previous MarAdmin 576/04 has been reinstated. For more information, call the Education Center 257-2158.

Base Post Office closure

The Base Post Office will be closed today through Saturday in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday.

The Base Post Office will reopen for regular business hours Monday. The Kailua and Kaneohe Post Office's will be open for regular business hours today.

For more information or any questions concerning the Military Post Office, contact Chief Warrant Officer 2 Randall Howell at 257-1834

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Important phone numbers

On-Base Emergencies	911
Military Police	257-7114
Child Protective Service	832-5300
Fraud, Waste, Abuse & EEO	257-8852
Pothole & Streetlight Repair	257-2380
Base Information	449-7110
MCB Hawaii Chaplain	257-3552
DEERS	257-2077



Hawaii Marine

www.mcbh.usmc.mil

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Courtesy photo | U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific

The Aiea Naval Hospital conducts an all-hands formation in front of the hospital here during World War II. On Jan. 1, 1944, Adm. Chester W. Nimitz ordered all able patients to assemble in front of the hospital in order to personally present the combat-wounded patients their awards. The building that currently headquarters U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific was once the primary rear-area hospital for the Navy and Marine Corps during World War II.

70 years takes Camp Smith from hospital to headquarters

**Lance Cpl.
Isis M. Ramirez**
U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific

CAMP H.M. SMITH, Hawaii — As the 70th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor and the start of the U.S. involvement in World War II draw near, service members here have an opportunity to reflect on their base's history.

Camp H.M. Smith is home to U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific, the largest field command in the Marine Corps, but in March 1941, Congress approved Aiea as the site, not for a headquarters, but for a place to build a Naval hospital.

The building that now houses the MarForPac headquarters was once used to treat the wounded Marines and sailors of World War II.

Construction on the Aiea Naval Hospital began in July 1939 because of the expectations of war, still the tragedy that occurred was more than anyone expected.

"Before [the attacks,] there was concern (about what) the Japanese were doing in the Pacific," said Robert Stubbs, the historian for Pacific Command.

"The Japanese had been given trusteeship over all of the German (colonies in the Pacific), which included many of the islands in Polynesia and Micronesia, so they already had outposts. They'd moved into China, were being more aggressive in South East Asia ... but no one imagined Pearl Harbor."

Months later, the surprise attack prompted the United States to enter World War II. Because of the fighting and increased need for a hospital, Aiea Naval Hospital was hurried to completion.

"When the war broke out in (December 1941), they sped up construction and finished it in 1942. This became the primary rear-area hospital for Navy and Marines," Stubbs said.

What is currently occupied with military work sections, desks and offices was then a series of wards, hospital beds and living quarters.

"That's why a lot of the old offices still have the really wide doors, so they (could) roll beds and gurneys in and out," Stubbs said.

As for the capabilities of the hospital, they correlated directly with the war. In 1943, the number of staff and facilities grew tremendously. New wards were constructed to better support the waves of casualties, numbering in the hundreds, arriving from the Solomon, Gilbert and Marshall Islands.

The hospital expanded again in 1944, adding staff and temporary wards to hold up to 5,000 patients. Aiea Naval Hospital had improved efficiency for admitting patients by the time casualties began arriving from Saipan, Guam and Tinian in the Mariana Islands.

On Jan. 1, 1944, Adm. Chester W. Nimitz personally presented awards to the many combat-wounded service members at the hospital. Patients

were assembled in front of the hospital where 632 men who fought during the Battle of Tarawa received awards.

Of the 41,872 admissions in 1944, 39,006 patients were relocated to the mainland or returned to duty, according to the hospital's historical documents.

In March 1945, the hospital peaked at 5,676 patients during the battles of Okinawa and Iwo Jima. But as high as the hospital's patient number was, so was its morale.

The enlisted staff and patients were entertained by well-known celebrities of the time. Stars like Joe Cronin, manager of the Boston Red Sox, Gaylord Carter, a famous radio organist, and others visited the hospital.

Bowling alleys, tennis and volleyball courts, and billiard tables were prescribed as therapy for some patients.

"Down where Bordelon Field is, a lot of the areas here on the camp were used as gardens," Stubbs said. "The patients would go work in the gardens. They'd use the food from the gardens to feed the patients, but that was more a rehabilitation-type activity."

In 1945, some of the hospital's staff were ordered back to the mainland for military separation. A year later, the patient capacity at the hospital was reduced from approximately 5,000 to 529 patients. In May 1949, the hospital stopped receiving patients altogether.

"It sat idle for a long time and they were in the process of selling all the property," Stubbs said. "Gen. (Holland M.) Smith came up and looked at it and decided this was what he wanted for the home of the (Fleet Marine Force Pacific) headquarters."

It was renamed on June 8, 1955, in honor of Smith, the first commanding general of Fleet Marine Force Pacific.

"Knowing that I'm working at a base where people who were famous in the Marine Corps and did amazing things stood 60 to 70 years ago (gives me a sense of pride) " said Sgt. Luke D. Madsen, a supply administration chief at Headquarters and Service Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific.

Today the halls no longer echo the sounds of nurses and corpsmen rushing to treat hundreds of wounded sailors and Marines.

There are no more patient evacuations or hospitalized heroes of the island-hopping campaign. Today, major military events like Operation Tomodachi and annual training exercises keep the halls of MarForPac busy.

"I think people who work here are proud to work at a place like this, the higher echelon over the Pacific Marines," Madsen said. "When they look down [the hill] they see the Arizona Memorial and [USS] Missouri, so they get that sense of history just from standing here."

MARFORPAC PRESENTS FREE HOLIDAY CONCERT

Press Release
U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific

CAMP H.M. SMITH, Hawaii – U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific is proud to announce that it will be presenting its 4th annual Na Mele o na Keiki (Music for the Children) Holiday Concert at 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec.1 at the Neal S. Blaisdell Concert Hall in Honolulu.

This will be the first major concert event of the 2011 Christmas season.

The concert features the MarForPac Band performing holiday favorites with a variety of local guest artists, including Motown-sound musicians Hawaiian Soul, jazz/blues guitarist Chris Vandercook, ukulele sensation Aidan James, Hawai'ian music duo Hapa, the "Wild Hawaiian" Henry Kaponono and Honorary Marine Corporal Jim Nabors.



Additionally this year, principle dancers from the Hawaii State Ballet will perform selections from "The Nutcracker" accompanied by the MarForPac Band.

Carole Kai and Kimo Kahoano will once again serve as the mistress and master of ceremonies.

This concert is presented as a gift to the community by MARFORPAC and BAE Systems, a world-wide partner with the USO, and is also a great opportunity to support the Marine Corps Reserve's Toys for Tots Hawaii program. Marines will be on hand to accept donations of new, unwrapped toys or cash for this year's collection effort.

General admission tickets for this family event are free and available now at the Blaisdell Box Office, which is open from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Doors will open the evening of the event at 6 p.m.

AROUND THE CORPS

MFE Marines steady shaken Turkish earthquake victims

Gunnery Sgt. William Price

U.S. Marine Corps Forces Europe

TRONDHEIM, Norway — Marines from Marine Forces Europe returned to Norway, Nov. 12-14, to begin a second round of disaster relief for thousands of citizens in Turkey's Van province, which was recently devastated by two massive earthquakes.

Utilizing the Marine Corps Prepositioning Program in Norway, the humanitarian assistance mission shipped more than 28,000 pounds of cold weather gear, including 110 sets of 10-man Arctic Cold weather tents, space heaters and fuel cans.

MCPP-N was first envisioned and began development in the early 1980s as a program to store air and ground supplies for supporting forward deployed forces, cold weather exercises, and training in the European theater. As the program evolved, it was extended to respond to crisis by providing humanitarian assistance.

Through a concerted effort by U.S. European Command, Blount Island Command, Headquarters Marine Corps, the U.S. Embassy, the Government of Norway, and the Norwegian military, the MFE team based out of Stuttgart, Germany, overcame the logistical challenges of coordinating this support.

"These two recent HA missions for Turkey show the quick response of MCPP-N in partnership with the NDLO/MEB [Norwegian Defense Logistics Organization/Marine Expeditionary Brigade]," said Neil Hagen, HQMC, Prepositioning Analyst and CGI contractor, stationed in Oslo. "The close relationship we've built over the years enabled it to occur as effectively as it did. Knowing what we had in the caves, determining what could support the need in Turkey, and doing it over a weekend, twice in two weeks, showed the effectiveness of our ashore prepositioning program here in Norway."

When the Marines from MFE landed at the Vaernes International Airport, in Trondheim, Norway, Nov. 12, they were met by Hagen. From there, their plan was put into action. The team wasted no time.

With the gear already being staged at the prepositioning caves, Marines arrived at the Tromsdal Cave, early the morning of Nov. 13. Navigating treacherous iced-over roads, they met with the Tromsdal Cave inspector, who loaded the trailer truck with space heaters to combat plunging temperatures in eastern Turkey, currently well below freezing nearly every night.

"When there is a catastrophe, we will do whatever it takes to help," said Einar Tromsdal, who has been running the cave since the inception of the MCPP-N program in 1988. When asked if the weather has ever been a factor throughout his tenure, he joked, "All

Norwegians are born with skis on their feet!"

With the space heaters loaded, the prepositioning team from MFE drove to the Frigaard cave to oversee the loading of the tents and fuel cans. The Marines and their Norwegian counterparts ensured the gear was meticulously weighed, measured and secured on palettes.

"We work closely with the Marine Corps, specifically Blount Island Command. We are in daily contact," said Maj. Kjell Mathisen, NDLO/MEB, executive officer. "For this joint partnership to be effective, it is important for us to be like a family. While we are normally closed on the weekends, to help the Turkish, we pulled the trigger and everyone was on deck to help."

Once all the equipment was loaded, it was shipped to the airfield in Vaernes, where all the parties involved would meet the following morning for loading on a U.S. Air Force C-130, from the 37th Air-lift Squadron, based out of Ramstein, Germany.

With a pressing deadline to meet, the Marines and Norwegian soldiers assembled five standard Air Force pallets for embarkation, and prepared load plans. When the C-130 arrived, the pallets were neatly aligned, netted, weighed and ready to load for an on time and on target C-130 bound for Erzurum, Turkey. Once in Turkey, these much-needed relief supplies would be distributed to the areas most heavily impacted by the earthquake.

"It is crucial that all the gear is loaded properly, and done so the first time," said Sgt. Paul

Evans, MFE Embarkation chief, and Bakersfield, Calif. native. "We don't want to overload the aircraft, or load it unbalanced, otherwise it will either leave late, or even worse, gear would have to be left behind."

The Marines and Norwegians worked expeditiously that morning to palletize the gear efficiently, knowing they had to get it right the first time. With minutes to spare, the U.S. Air Force Europe aircraft was loaded and "wheels up," on its way to provide housing and warmth for thousands of Turkish citizens in desperate need.

"This mission was a varsity effort all around," said Maj. Tim Robertson, an MFE logistics and planning officer, and Corcoran, Calif. native. "Special thanks to the Norwegians who worked so hard over the weekend to ensure this mission was a success. The timely actions by all involved have eased some of the suffering in Turkey. Our hearts and prayers go out to the victims of this recent disaster."

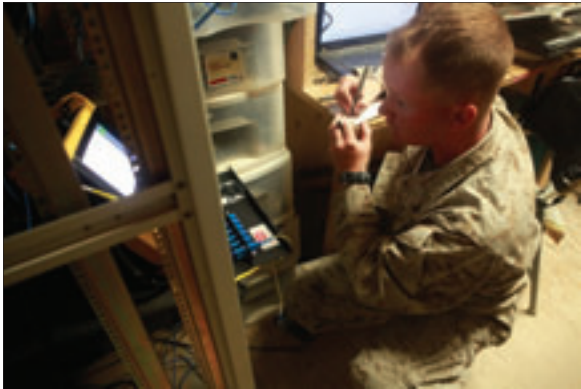
"Overall, I felt it was a very successful operation," Paul Evans added. "Normally we conduct training exercises, but taking part in a real-world effort and to help people in need makes me even prouder of what I do."



Gunnery Sgt. William Price | U.S. Marine Corps Forces Europe

Sgt. Paul Evans, Marine Forces Europe Embarkation chief, measures the length of disaster relief gear at the Vaernes International Airport in Norway, Nov. 14.

Marines upgrade digital communications in Afghanistan



Cpl. Justin M. Boling | 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward)

Lance Cpl. Bradley Gatz checks fiber optic cables after they are installed in a building at Camp Dwyer, Afghanistan, Nov. 4.

Cpl. Justin M. Boling

2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward)

CAMP DWYER, Afghanistan — Coalition troops at Camp Dwyer, Afghanistan, now have better communications thanks to the nonstop efforts of a small detachment of Marines.

A detachment of fewer than 100 Marines from Marine Wing Communication Squadron 28 worked for the past few months to upgrade communications at the forward operating base.

Camp Dwyer serves as a base of operations for Regimental Combat Team 5 and elements from 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward) in southern Helmand province.

Regimental Combat Team 5 serves under 2nd Marine Division (Forward), the ground combat element of Marine Corps forces in southwestern Afghanistan. The Wing is the aviation combat element for the southwestern regional command of the NATO's International Security Assistance Force.

Prior to upgrading to fiber optic cable, Camp Dwyer relied on tactical data wires for its communications. These wires were set above the ground where they could be easily damaged, potentially interrupting communications.

Moving the entire system underground safeguards communications between Camp Dwyer and other units operating throughout the Helmand province, as they conduct counterinsurgency operations, the communications squadron's Marines said.

"We provide the communication for the medical evacuation teams to be able to coordinate to save soldiers' and Marines' lives," explained Cpl. Kayla Erianne, a radio operator with the Marine Wing Communications Squadron 28 detachment. "We're also the ones that provide the morale lines back to the States, so that you are able to hear your loved ones' voices and know that they're OK."

"We are taking everyone off the old tactical wire network and putting them on a commercial network that is more similar to what you would see back in the States," said 1st Lt. Darnell Billups, the wire platoon commander for the detachment, and a native of Philadelphia. "This allows equipment to survive a lot longer."

Marines from many different specialties came together to install the 60 miles of fiber optic cable that will allow for improved data and voice communications for the Camp Dwyer troops.

"The fact that we were able to do this in such short order and train here to become experts is directly due to the hard work of our sergeants and corporals," said Billups.

"Since we have been here we have been working up to this," said Erianne, a native of Bridgeton, N.J. "I was only recently promoted to corporal and this was my first real chance to lead Marines. I have learned a ton every day, and it has made me a better leader."

Tim McGraw draws thousands to Pendleton

Lance Cpl. Michelle Mattei

Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton

CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.

— More than 27,000 attendees gathered at Camp Pendleton's Paige Fieldhouse to attend Tim McGraw's Tour for the Troops free concert, Nov. 13.

The event was sponsored by Air Force Reserve, TriWest Healthcare Alliance and Marine Corps Community Services to benefit The Tug McGraw Foundation.

"I am proud to perform for the troops and to celebrate our heroes, bringing attention to the need to improve quality of life among men and women who serve our country," said Tim McGraw honorary chairman of the Tug McGraw Foundation.

The goal of the foundation is to educate members of the military and civilians about the increasing number of service members affected by post-

traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury. Tug McGraw, father of Tim McGraw and legendary baseball pitcher, died from a brain tumor in 2003, which inspired the creation of their charity.

"My father was in the Marine Corps Reserves throughout his professional baseball career," said Mark McGraw, Tug McGraw's son. "Our family has always supported the troops, so our foundation is another way to say thank you and help service members who are suffering become aware of the programs available to help them."

Tour for the Troops has brought top entertainers to all branches of the military, both domestically and overseas, where families can enjoy local bands, concessions, merchandise and children's play areas.

"We are so excited to put on such a large event for our Marines

and sailors and their families," said Christine Chilleme, special events manager for MCCS and coordinator of the event. "The most rewarding part is seeing how happy everyone is and knowing they're having a great time."

Various cover bands performed to entertain the crowd prior to Tim McGraw's performance, which opened up with his hit song, "Barbeque Stain," and carried on an hour and a half show that he dedicated to the service members and wounded warriors.

"It's great to see a show like this put on for the Marines, especially when it raises awareness for the wounded warriors," said Jay Vargaus, Medal of Honor recipient and guest speaker for the event who spoke about the harsh effects of PTSD. "Hopefully this show boosts the morale of [the base] and we can knock down that doggone suicide rate."



Lance Cpl. Michelle Mattei | Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton

Lt. Gen. Thomas D. Waldhauser, commanding general, I Marine Expeditionary Force, and Sgt. Maj. Randall Carter, sergeant major, I MEF, present country music star and actor Tim McGraw with a commemorative unit KA-BAR and plaque thanking him for all of his support for the Marine Corps, Nov. 13. McGraw hosted a free concert for Camp Pendleton to help raise awareness and educate Marines about post traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury.

MARINES READY GARMSIR FOR TRANSITION OF AUTHORITY

Cpl. Reece Lodder

Regimental Combat Team 5

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DELHI, Helmand province, Afghanistan — Following the completion of 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment's successful seven-month deployment here, Lt. Col. Matthew J. Palma, 3/3 commanding officer, accepted responsibility of the district from Lt. Col. Sean Riordan, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment commanding officer, during a relief in place and transfer of authority ceremony here, Nov. 17.

Though "America's Battalion" has been operating in Garmsir for two weeks, the ceremony marked the official turnover of the district between the two battalions.

Under 1/3's watch, Garmsir has become a symbol of progress. During their deployment, the "Lava Dogs" focused on preparing the Afghan National Security Forces to take on a greater role in counterinsurgency operations. The Marines and sailors of 3/3 will continue to mentor ANSF as they progress toward taking lead security responsibility in the district. Infrastructure development projects like canal reconstruction are in full swing district-wide.

The threat of improvised explosive devices still looms over the district, but the pervasive insurgency of two years ago has almost completely disappeared.

"The level of violence within Garmsir has decreased significantly, to the point where we're now focusing our efforts on developing the Afghan National Police to provide this security," Palma said. "As they continue to develop and mature, we'll move into a position of over watch. This will allow them to continue to gain their own independent competence."

Over the course of their deployment, 3/3's Kilo Company will train and mentor the ANP, and work together to establish police facilities in each of Garmsir's eight precincts, Capt. Brian Blaine, Kilo Co. commander and a native of Ruleville, Miss., said.

In positions beyond the battalions headquarters here, India and Lima Companies are integrating with a larger population and training the Afghan National Army. Further south, 3/3's Weapons Company is partnering with the Afghan Border Police to prevent insurgent infiltration from across the eastern desert.

The success of partnered efforts mirrors the outlook of local and Marine leaders on the future of Garmsir.

Over his two years in office, District Governor Mohammad Fahim has received support from four Marine infantry battalions. He declared Garmsir the "safest district in Helmand province" because of the thriving partnership between Afghan and Marine forces here.

Over a celebratory dinner at the district center, Nov. 17, Fahim thanked Riordan and his Marines for improving Garmsir and bolstering its security. He said this enabled the growth of education and allowed for construction projects including six schools and numerous bridges.

Echoing the sentiments of a room packed with local elders, Fahim called the Marines of 1/3 his brothers, honoring their relationship forged over seven months of close partnership. He continued, speaking excitedly about the progress his district will make under the watch of Palma and the Marines of "America's Battalion."



Cpl. Reece Lodder | Regimental Combat Team 5

Lt. Col. Matthew J. Palma and Sgt. Maj. Andrew Cece, the commanding officer and sergeant major of 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, attach an Operation Enduring Freedom battle streamer to the battalion battle colors during a relief in place and transfer of authority ceremony here, Nov. 17.



Cpl. Reece Lodder | Regimental Combat Team 5

Lt. Col. Sean Riordan and Sgt. Maj. Dwight D. Jones, the commanding officer and sergeant major of 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, retire their battalion battle colors to make way for those of 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment during a relief in place and transfer of authority ceremony here, Nov. 17. Though "America's Battalion" has been operating in Garmsir for two weeks, the ceremony marked the official turnover of the area of operations between the two battalions. During their deployment, the 1/3 "Lava Dogs" focused on preparing the Afghan National Security Forces to take on a greater role in counterinsurgency operations. The Marines and sailors of 3/3 will continue to mentor ANSF as they progress toward taking lead security responsibility in the district. "We are winning this war," District Governor Mohammad Fahim said. "I'm optimistic that with the help of the 3/3 Marines, we'll have peace and stability in Garmsir forever."



Cpl. Colby Brown | Regimental Combat Team 5

Lt. Col. Sean Riordan, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment battalion commander, bids farewell to Garmsir during the ceremony at Forward Operating Base Delhi, Nov. 17. Riordan is a native of Montclair, Va. The "Lava Dogs," 1/3, transferred authority of Garmsir to "America's Battalion," 3/3. During their seven-month deployment the Marines and sailors of 1/3 have helped Garmsir progress toward transitioning authority of the district to Afghan security forces and the Afghan government. The "Lava Dogs," who arrived here mid-April, began the journey home to Marine Corps Base Hawaii in early November.



Cpl. Reece Lodder | Regimental Combat Team 5

Lt. Col. Matthew J. Palma, the commanding officer of 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, encourages his Marines to devote themselves to helping transition Garmsir to the local government during a relief in place and transfer of authority ceremony here, Nov. 17.

"We are winning this war," Fahim said. "I'm optimistic that with the help of the 3/3 Marines, we'll have peace and stability in Garmsir forever."

Palma assured the crowd of his dedication to making the district a safe place where future generations can live in peace.

"This idea of a democratic Afghanistan is bigger than the insurgents can defeat ... its momentum is unstoppable," Palma said. "Afghanistan has a deep pool of talented, patriotic servants committed to the country, and a government willing to step up and accept responsibility of the interim security and overall destiny of the country. Our enemies are fighting a losing battle. They just haven't fully accepted it yet."

Editor's note: 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, is currently assigned to Regimental Combat Team 5, 2nd Marine Division (Forward), which heads Task Force Leatherneck. The task force serves as the ground combat element of Regional Command (Southwest) and works in partnership with the Afghanistan National Security Forces and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to conduct counterinsurgency operations. The unit is dedicated to securing the Afghan people, defeating insurgent forces, and enabling the ANSF assumption of security responsibilities within its operations in order to support the expansion of stability, development and legitimate governance.

Lest we forget: Remembrance service honors Garmsir fallen

Cpl. Reece Lodder
Regimental Combat Team 5

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DELHI, Helmand province, Afghanistan — Since 2006, coalition forces have fought to bring security and stability to the once insurgent-heavy Garmsir district. Five years later, coalition forces are near transitioning control of the district to the local government.

Amidst this progress, the sacrifice of coalition forces that lost their lives here remains etched into Garmsir’s history. Members of the Afghan National Security Forces joined Marines with 1st and 3rd Battalions, 3rd Marine Regiment, and British forces to honor the fallen during a remembrance service, Nov. 11.

“These lives are important for us to remember together today,” said Maj. Andrew Green, the commanding officer of 512 Specialist Team, Royal Engineers, British Army. “We support each other in our joint mission, so remembering together shows respect for those we’ve lost.”

Held in front of the FOB Delhi Memorial, the service commemorated Veterans Day and the British Remembrance Day. It marked the first time Afghan forces joined in remembering Garmsir’s fallen since British forces began combat operations here in 2006.

Forty Marines and 15 British forces have been killed in Garmsir since then. In the last year and a half, 12 members of Afghan forces have lost their lives here.

“We count these casualties as sacrifice and respect this day for those who lost their lives for our country,” said Afghan National Army Sgt. Maj. Mohammad Khalid, the sergeant major of 2nd Kandak, 1st Brigade, 215 Corps, from Lugar province. “Commemorating this day together is important for us because it helps our soldiers see other people care about their development.”

British forces built the memorial in 2008 to honor their fallen, but Green recently led a reconstruction project to include fallen U.S. and Afghan forces. Placed beneath the three nations’ flags, the simple memorial is adorned with a wooden cross and poppy wreaths, signifying the blood shed by British forces in poppy fields during World War I. Surrounding the memorial are white rocks symbolizing the relative peace now found in Garmsir, and scattered among them are 40 red rocks, one for each Marine who lost his life fighting to secure the district.

Navy Cmdr. Mark Winward, Regimental Combat Team 5 chaplain and a native of East Hartford, Ct., led the service. He spoke about deep roots between British and U.S. forces dating back to World War I. Winward said remembering those sacrifices was vital to staying focused on today’s shared mission — enabling the Afghan National Security Forces to stand up on their own.

As the ANSF interact with their 3/3 mentors and develop alongside them, Khalid was optimistic about his country’s future. While the past five years of fighting have been costly, Garmsir’s security has increased, he said.

“Now that our security is good, we can celebrate these days,” Khalid said. “We can’t do everything on our own right now, but if we listen to each other and have discussions with the Marines, our security will continue to progress.”



Cpl. Reece Lodder | Regimental Combat Team 5

First Sgt. Wesley Misenhimer, the Headquarters and Service Company first sergeant for 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment from Castro Valley, Calif., calls off the names of Marines killed during combat operations in Garmsir district during a remembrance service at the FOB Delhi Memorial, Nov. 11. Afghan National Security Forces joined Marines and British forces to honor the fallen during the service, which commemorated Veterans Day and the British Remembrance Day. Since 2006, coalition forces have fought to bring security and stability to the once insurgent-heavy Garmsir district. Forty Marines and 15 British forces have been killed here since then. In the last year and a half, twelve ANSF have been killed here. Five years later, coalition forces are near transitioning control of the district to the local government.



Cpl. Reece Lodder | Regimental Combat Team 5

A formation of Marines with 1st and 3rd Battalions, 3rd Marine Regiment, honor coalition forces killed in Garmsir district with two minutes of silence during a remembrance service at the FOB Delhi Memorial, Nov. 11.

Scopes to notes: One Marine’s journey from technician to musician

Lance Cpl. Isis M. Ramirez
U.S. Marine Forces, Pacific

CAMP H.M. SMITH — As the summer months were approaching, cold still lingered in the small towns of northern New Zealand. Members of the local community took refuge from the weather inside a civic center to be entertained by the performance of a military band. The audience was noticeably captivated by what they were hearing. The drummer’s beats echoed around the room, setting the mood for musicians’ individual solos. One musician was feeling the beat and prepared to show the audience his skill.

Thousands of miles from his hometown in Polk County, North Carolina, he stood in his Dress Blue Delta uniform, 64-inches tall, no heavier than 140 pounds, blowing his trumpet high and loud, so entwined in his performance, with a style most trumpet players dream to achieve.

Cpl. Paul A. Tafoya, 21, travels to countries all over the Pacific as a trumpet player for the U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific Band, but when he enlisted into the Marine Corps, it wasn’t to be musician.

After graduating from Polk County High School in 2008, Tafoya said he enlisted to become a warrior. He wanted to play a role in the war on terror and deploy to Afghanistan.

He enlisted as an open contract with the hopes he would land a specialty that would give him the opportunity for a deployment.

It was at the end of Marine combat training that the instructors read the military occupational specialty number “2171.” Tafoya had to ask what the numbers meant.

Soon after, he was on his way to an Army school in Aberdeen Proving



Lance Cpl. Isis M. Ramirez | U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific

Cpl. Paul A. Tafoya, a trumpet player for the U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific Band, still holds the military occupational specialty of an electro-optical ground ordnance repairer and technician. Tafoya received temporary additional duty orders to the band after proving to be a good musician and now travels throughout the Pacific for MarForPac.

Grounds, Maryland, to learn the job of an electro-optical ground ordnance repairer and technician.

In September 2009, he received his orders to Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, and started working for the 3rd Marine Regimental armory.

“When we worked together, he used to tell me he played a lot of instruments,” said Lance Cpl. Loyd L. Carter, an optics tech who worked and deployed with Tafoya. “He always seemed like he really loved music. He would play a lot of jazz music in (our barracks) room.”

Finally, in February 2010, he received his opportunity to deploy with 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment to Afghanistan.

“He was more excited (in Afghanistan) because it’s obviously different than (being at base),” Carter said. “When we first got to Afghanistan, he wasn’t doing his job being an optics tech. He was in

different positions that we had in the battalion and check people’s optics to make sure they were working right,” Tafoya said.

After the deployment, Tafoya returned to his job at the regimental armory at K-Bay. After finding out he wouldn’t be able to deploy again, Tafoya began considering a move to the MarForPac Band.

“Since the sixth grade, I played the trumpet,” Tafoya said. “Then I decided that I was going to put it away for a little bit and come back to it after I was done with the Marine Corps, but we got a bunch of new optics techs from the school. They want to deploy every Marine they can. I wasn’t going to get the chance to go back [to Afghanistan] with [3rd Battalion].”

He was at a performance of the MarForPac band when he decided to ask one of the current members about how to try out for the band.

He began practicing after work at the band hall in January 2011 and tried out for the band soon after. He was given temporary additional duty orders to the band and immediately impressed many of the band’s staff. He was expected to be able to learn new songs and play pieces from all different musical styles.

“He was the awesome new guy that could play his trumpet really well, better than most of the trumpet players in the band,” said Staff Sgt. Andres R. Trujillo, Tafoya’s jazz combination and show band leader. “Party band is all memorized music. You can’t go out there with a music stand and read the music. You have to internalize it so well that you can interact with the crowd and you can dance, move around and improvise really well.”

“To have someone transfer from another MOS and to be able to play that great is very unique,” said Staff Sgt. Joshua Torres, one of the band’s staff noncommissioned officers for training. “You see him inside the practice room pretty much every night. It’s impressive.”

Since Tafoya has been with the band, he has been a trumpet player for shows all over the Pacific. He’s traveled to Cambodia, Samoa, Vietnam, Tonga and New Zealand. He was also nominated by his unit to be the Marine Musician of the Year.

Tafoya is more than satisfied with the accomplishments of his current enlistment. He plans to get out of the Marine Corps after his contract ends and aspires to continue playing music. His goal is to eventually teach the skill to high school students.

“If I could teach a kid to play really well I would die happy,” Tafoya said.



Cpl. Jody Lee Smith | Marine Corps Base Hawaii

Maj. Gen. Peter J. Talleri, commanding general, Marine Corps Installations Pacific, places garbage inside the Terragon Environmental Technologies Micro Auto Gasification System aboard Camp H. M. Smith, Hawaii, Oct. 18. The system reduces solid waste while also giving off heat that can be used for cooking.

Marines test new energy-efficient weapon in the war on trash

Dave Nystrom

Office of Naval Research

CAMP H.M. SMITH — In partnership with the Office of Naval Research, Marines at Camp Smith, Hawaii, are testing a high-tech trash disposal system that can reduce a standard 50-gallon bag of waste to a half-pint jar of harmless ash.

Called the Micro Auto Gasification System, the unit is currently undergoing evaluation by U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific as a possible solution to help Marines win their daily battle against the increasing trash at remote forward operating bases. Video footage of the system in action is online.

Lt. Col. Mike Jernigan, a Marine combat engineer who recently commanded a logistics battalion in Afghanistan, said waste disposal in the field is a problem.

“Right now, there are really only two solutions: burn it or bury it,” Jernigan said. “Any potential solution must reduce the security and logistics concerns of trash disposal, and help the environment ... that’s a good thing for the Marine Corps.”

MAGS is both environmentally friendly and fuel efficient. A controlled decomposition process, which thermally converts energy from biomass is the key to MAGS’ effectiveness.



Chuck Little | U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific

CAMP H. M. SMITH, HI — Leon Labry, the MAGS manufacturer’s representative, demonstrates the loading process of the Micro Auto Gasification System waste disposal process to chemistry students from Damien Memorial High School Sept. 12.

“The system essentially bakes the trash and recovers a high portion of combustible gas byproduct, which is used to fuel the process,” said Donn Murakami, the MarForPac science adviser who leads the Marine Corps’ evaluation team.

Developed under the Environmental Quality, Discovery and Invention program at ONR and in collaboration with the Canada’s Department of Na-

tional Defence, MAGS was designed to meet the need for a compact, solid-waste disposal system for both ships and shore facilities.

“Decades ago, the idea of harvesting energy from trash was just a side show in the environmental movement,” said Steve McElvany, the MAGS program officer at ONR. “Now, the technology is mature enough to where the Department of the Navy is

seriously evaluating its practical and tactical benefits.”

The energy-efficient and clean-burning properties of MAGS make it attractive to expeditionary units. It has a low carbon footprint, and emissions are not visible, which is a tactical plus.

Waste heat can also be used for practical purposes, such as heating living quarters or water.

“What we are doing for FOBs can be applied to schools, hospitals or an office building,” Murakami said. “We are talking about disposing our waste in a different manner, rather than just sending it to the landfill.”

Testing of MAGS will continue through March.

Next summer, phase three of the evaluation will address the system’s expeditionary aspect at the Pohakuloa Training Area. Hawaii.

MAGS is an example of how ONR energy programs are helping the Department of the Navy. The current task is for the Navy to meet its ashore goal of producing 50 percent of installation energy requirements from alternative sources by 2020.

For more information about other energy-efficient projects from the Navy, visit <http://www.onr.navy.mil> or contact the Office of Naval Research at 703-696-5031.

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NATIVE AMERICAN, from A-1

with a Native American weapon provided by the performers.

According to the National Native American Heritage Month website, a time of observance for Native Americans has been called for as far back as 1915. National Native American Heritage Month was officially recognized in 1990.

“This month, we celebrate the rich heritage and myriad contributions of American Indians and Alaska Natives, and we rededicate ourselves to supporting tribal sovereignty, tribal self-determination, and prosperity for all Native Americans,” writes President Barack Obama in his 2011 proclamation. “We will seek to strengthen our nation-to-nation relationship by ensuring tribal nations have a voice in shaping national policies impacting tribal communities.”

There are approximately 25,000 Native Americans currently living in Hawaii, and they make up the largest minority group currently serving in the military. For more information about the observance and its history, visit <http://www.nativeamericanheritagemonth.gov>.



Kristen Wong | Hawaii Marine

David Bevett shakes hands with Maj. Ronald T. Flora, the executive officer of 3rd Radio Battalion, at the National Native American Heritage Month luncheon, at Anderson Hall Dining Facility, Nov. 17. National Native American Heritage Month is celebrated during the month of November. Aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, 3rd Radio Battalion hosted a luncheon at Anderson Hall Dining Facility, featuring performances by Bevett and Guywood Dela Cruz, as well as remarks by Bevett and David Windhorse Long.

NEW AIRCRAFT, from A-1

“Third Marines fights as part of a combined arms team,” Lt. Col. Thomas D. Wood, operations officer, 3rd Marine Regiment, said. “Consequently, we’re particularly eager to have the new heavy and medium lift, light attack and unmanned squadrons join our brother units in [Marine Aircraft Group 24] over the coming years. We see the addition of these flying leathernecks and the capabilities that they bring to be critical additions to Hawaii’s Marine Air-Ground team. From an infantryman’s point of view, the arrival of these units will exponentially enhance our regiment’s ability to locate, close with and destroy the enemy.”

The new aircraft will give units the ability to stand up as a Marine Air-Ground Task Force as opposed to before, when they would use only one aircraft, according to Lt. Col. Timothy B. Pochop, systems operations officer, MAG-24. This would give MCB Hawaii units the chance to assist with natural disasters on a larger scale.

“In the next five years, assault support capabilities are going to increase in conjunction with the CH-53 Echos,” Pochop said. “This will increase range and lift capabilities for our unit, hence increase other spectrum of humanitarian and disaster relief missions we can support.”

Pochop also explained the new aircraft could travel farther into the Pacific and cover smaller zones, as needed to support the mission.

To support the aircraft scheduled to start arriving next fall, about 1,000 active duty personnel would be brought to MCB Hawaii. The initial P-8A Poseidon are scheduled to arrive in 2015, and one squadron



Chief Petty Officer John Lill | Courtesy photo

An MV-22 Osprey assigned to Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 166 approaches the amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island. This is the first time an Osprey has conducted flight operations on a west coast amphibious assault ship since being introduced to the fleet.

of 12 Ospreys is slated for 2014 with the second in 2015.

Col. Richard L. Caputo Jr., commanding officer, MAG-24, said his unit was honored to be a small part of the Marine Corps’ expansion in the Pacific. Caputo plans to follow the deputy commandant of the Marine Corps for aviation’s timeline and the development outlined in the 2011 Aviation Campaign Plan.

“This significant MAG evolution includes the enhancement of the established heavy lift assault support

mission and the added capabilities of a light attack squadron, two medium lift tilt-rotor squadrons, an unmanned aerial vehicle squadron, and a Marine Wing Support Detachment,” Caputo said. “The increase in Marine aviation capabilities aboard [Marine Corps Air Station] Kaneohe Bay will better support our Marine infantry in the execution of the commandant’s vision of a potent “middle weight” force capable of carrying the day in the Pacific.”

LAVA DOGS, from A-1

welcome home their husbands, who were among the last ones off the plane. But the moment Christian saw her husband; she bolted toward him, wasting no time giving him a kiss.

“It feels so great to be home,” Christian said. “I’m looking forward to spending time with my wife on leave

and enjoying the holidays.”

Once his leave starts, the couple plans to take a vacation to visit family in Christian’s hometown in Alabama.

After the welcome, Marines and sailors turned in their weapons at the armory and then departed for some down time. The remainder of the battalion returned home with members of 1st Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment this week.